

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN
NORTHERN DIVISION

LAMAR J. WILSON,

Plaintiff,

Case No. 2:13-cv-313

v.

Honorable R. Allan Edgar

T. MACKIE,

Defendants.

OPINION

This is a civil rights action brought by a state prisoner pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The Court has granted Plaintiff leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* without payment of an initial partial filing fee. Under the Prison Litigation Reform Act, PUB. L. NO. 104-134, 110 STAT. 1321 (1996), the Court is required to dismiss any prisoner action brought under federal law if the complaint is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2), 1915A; 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(c). The Court must read Plaintiff's *pro se* complaint indulgently, *see Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972), and accept Plaintiff's allegations as true, unless they are clearly irrational or wholly incredible. *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 33 (1992). Applying these standards, Plaintiff's action will be dismissed for failure to state a claim.

Factual Allegations

Plaintiff Lamar J. Wilson, a state prisoner confined at the Baraga Maximum Correctional Facility (AMF), filed this civil rights action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against Defendants Warden T. Mackie, Resident Unit Manager W. Jondreau, Deputy Warden K. Tribley, and Assistant Resident Unit Supervisor J. Burke. In his complaint, Plaintiff claims that when he arrived at AMF from the Chippewa Correctional Facility (URF) on April 29, 2013, he met with Security Classification Committee (SCC) members Defendants Jondreau and Tribley. Defendants Jondreau and Tribley told Plaintiff that he would be placed in segregation for misconducts committed while at URF. Plaintiff replied that he had already done time in segregation for those misconducts and had been released to the general population prior to his transfer. Nevertheless, Defendants Jondreau and Tribley had Plaintiff placed in segregation.

On May 9, 2013, and May 12, 2013, Plaintiff wrote to W. Tripoli and to Defendant Mackie in an effort to rectify his erroneous placement in segregation before he saw the Parole Board. However, when Plaintiff saw the Parole Board on May 21, 2013, he was still in segregation, which prejudiced his chance of being paroled. On May 23, 2013, Plaintiff contacted W. Lesatz and told him that he was due for his 30 day review. Lesatz told Plaintiff that he called URF after the SCC interview and was told that Plaintiff had been released to the general population prior to his transfer. Lesatz stated that this would be honored at AMF. On May 28, 2013, Plaintiff was released to the “re-integration” unit.

Plaintiff claims that Defendants’ conduct violated his procedural due process rights and constituted cruel and unusual punishment. Plaintiff seeks compensatory and punitive damages, as well as declaratory and injunctive relief.

Discussion

I. Failure to state a claim

A complaint may be dismissed for failure to state a claim if it fails “‘to give the defendant fair notice of what the . . . claim is and the grounds upon which it rests.’” *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007) (quoting *Conley v. Gibson*, 355 U.S. 41, 47 (1957)). While a complaint need not contain detailed factual allegations, a plaintiff’s allegations must include more than labels and conclusions. *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555; *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (“Threadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action, supported by mere conclusory statements, do not suffice.”). The court must determine whether the complaint contains “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.” *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 570. “A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 679. Although the plausibility standard is not equivalent to a “‘probability requirement,’ . . . it asks for more than a sheer possibility that a defendant has acted unlawfully.” *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678 (quoting *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 556). “[W]here the well-pleaded facts do not permit the court to infer more than the mere possibility of misconduct, the complaint has alleged – but it has not ‘show[n]’ – that the pleader is entitled to relief.” *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 679 (quoting FED. R. CIV. P. 8(a)(2)); *see also Hill v. Lappin*, 630 F.3d 468, 470-71 (6th Cir. 2010) (holding that the *Twombly/Iqbal* plausibility standard applies to dismissals of prisoner cases on initial review under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915A(b)(1) and 1915(e)(2)(B)(i)).

To state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege the violation of a right secured by the federal Constitution or laws and must show that the deprivation was committed by

a person acting under color of state law. *West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988); *Dominguez v. Corr. Med. Servs.*, 555 F.3d 543, 549 (6th Cir. 2009). Because § 1983 is a method for vindicating federal rights, not a source of substantive rights itself, the first step in an action under § 1983 is to identify the specific constitutional right allegedly infringed. *Albright v. Oliver*, 510 U.S. 266, 271 (1994).

Plaintiff fails to state a procedural due process claim arising from his placement in administrative segregation on April 29, 2013. Generally courts will consider the nature and duration of a stay in segregation in determining whether it imposes an “atypical and significant hardship.” *Harden-Bey*, 524 F.3d at 793. In *Sandin*, the Supreme Court concluded that disciplinary segregation for thirty days “did not present the type of atypical, significant deprivation in which a State might conceivably create a liberty interest.” 515 U.S. at 486. Likewise, the Sixth Circuit has often held that administrative segregation alone does not involve an “atypical and significant” hardship implicating a protected liberty interest. *See e.g., Jones v. Baker*, 155 F.3d 810, 812-13 (6th Cir. 1998); *Rimmer-Bey v. Brown*, 62 F.3d 789, 790-91 (6th Cir. 1995) (holding a Michigan prisoner’s complaint about his placement in administrative segregation without a hearing did not rise to the level of an “atypical and significant hardship”). The Sixth Circuit had held that a prisoner may present a § 1983 claim alleging that placement in administrative segregation is “atypical and significant in relation to the ordinary incidents of prison life” only in extreme circumstances. *See Harden-Bey*, 524 F.3d at 795.

Plaintiff was confined in administrative segregation for 29 days. To determine whether segregation of an inmate from the general prison population involves the deprivation of a liberty interest protected by the due process clause, the Court must determine if the segregation imposes an “atypical and significant” hardship on the inmate “in relation to the ordinary incidents

of prison life.” *Jones v. Baker*, 155 F.3d 810, 811 (6th Cir. 1998) (quoting *Sandin v. Conner*, 515 U.S. 472, 483 (1995)). Under various circumstances, the Sixth Circuit has repeatedly found that confinement to administrative segregation does not present an “atypical and significant” hardship implicating a protected liberty interest. *See Jones*, 155 F.3d at 812-23 (two years of segregation while inmate was investigated for murder of prison guard in riot); *Rimmer-Bey v. Brown*, 62 F.3d 789, 790-91 (6th Cir. 1995) (inmate serving life sentence was placed in segregation after serving thirty days of detention for misconduct conviction of conspiracy to commit assault and battery); *Mackey v. Dyke*, 111 F.3d 460 (6th Cir.1997) (one year of segregation after inmate was found guilty of possession of illegal contraband and assault and where reclassification was delayed due to prison crowding). Although plaintiff states that his placement in segregation has been “atypical and significant,” he merely uses the legal jargon and presents no factual allegations to support his conclusion. The only allegation he presents regarding his segregation is that its duration has been for more than one year. The length of the placement is not determinative. *See Jones*, 155 F.3d at 812. Plaintiff has failed to make any allegations which that his segregation is “atypical and significant.” Consequently, the court concludes that no liberty interest is implicated by his placement.

Moreover, the fact that Plaintiff was denied parole does not violate his due process rights. Plaintiff fails to raise a claim of constitutional magnitude because he has no liberty interest in being released on parole. There is no constitutional or inherent right to be conditionally released before the expiration of a prison sentence. *Greenholtz v. Inmates of Neb. Penal & Corr. Complex*, 442 U.S. 1, 7 (1979). Although a state may establish a parole system, it has no duty to do so; thus, the presence of a parole system by itself does not give rise to a constitutionally protected liberty

interest in parole release. *Id.* at 7, 11; *Bd. of Pardons v. Allen*, 482 U.S. 369, 373 (1987). Rather, a liberty interest is present only if state law entitles an inmate to release on parole. *Inmates of Orient Corr. Inst. v. Ohio State Adult Parole Auth.*, 929 F.2d 233, 235 (6th Cir. 1991).

In *Sweeton v. Brown*, 27 F.3d 1162, 1164-165 (6th Cir. 1994) (en banc), the Sixth Circuit, noting “the broad powers of the Michigan authorities to deny parole,” held that the Michigan system does not create a liberty interest in parole. In a recent published decision, the Sixth Circuit reiterated the continuing validity of *Sweeton*. See *Crump v. Lafler*, 657 F.3d 393, 404 (6th Cir. 2011). In *Crump*, the court held that the adoption of specific parole guidelines since *Sweeton* does not lead to the conclusion that parole release is mandated upon reaching a high probability of parole. See *id.*; see also *Carnes v. Engler*, 76 F. App’x 79, 80 (6th Cir. 2003). In addition, the Sixth Circuit has rejected the argument that the Due Process Clause is implicated when changes to parole procedures and practices have resulted in incarcerations that exceed the subjective expectation of the sentencing judge. See *Foster v. Booker*, 595 F.3d 353, 369 (6th Cir. 2010). Finally, the Michigan Supreme Court has recognized that there exists no liberty interest in parole under the Michigan system. *Glover v. Mich. Parole Bd.*, 596 N.W.2d 598, 603-04 (Mich. 1999).

Until Plaintiff has served his maximum sentence, he has no reasonable expectation of liberty. The discretionary parole system in Michigan holds out “no more than a mere hope that the benefit will be obtained.” *Greenholtz*, 442 U.S. at 11. The Michigan Parole Board’s failure or refusal to consider Plaintiff for parole, therefore, implicates no federal right. In the absence of a liberty interest, Plaintiff fails to state a claim for a violation of his procedural due process rights.

Finally, to the extent Plaintiff attempts to bring a claim under the Eighth Amendment, his claim fails. The mere fact that Plaintiff was placed in detention, with nothing more, is insufficient

to state an Eighth Amendment claim. *See Lacey v. Michigan Dep't of Corr.*, No. 95-1097, 1995 WL 564301 (6th Cir. Sept. 21, 1995) (placement in detention did not violate Eighth Amendment); *Eaddy v. Foltz*, No. 85-1419, 1985 WL 14065 (6th Cir. Dec. 18, 1985) (whether an Eighth Amendment claim is stated for placement in segregation depends upon severity or pervasiveness of conditions). Plaintiff has not alleged that his detention was more severe than the typical conditions of segregation. Accordingly, Plaintiff's Eighth Amendment claim is properly dismissed.

Conclusion

Having conducted the review required by the Prison Litigation Reform Act, the Court determines that Plaintiff's action will be dismissed for failure to state a claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2) and 1915A(b), and 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(c).

The Court must next decide whether an appeal of this action would be in good faith within the meaning of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3). *See McGore v. Wrigglesworth*, 114 F.3d 601, 611 (6th Cir. 1997). For the same reasons that the Court dismisses the action, the Court discerns no good-faith basis for an appeal. Should Plaintiff appeal this decision, the Court will assess the \$455.00 appellate filing fee pursuant to § 1915(b)(1), *see McGore*, 114 F.3d at 610-11, unless Plaintiff is barred from proceeding *in forma pauperis*, e.g., by the "three-strikes" rule of § 1915(g). If he is barred, he will be required to pay the \$455.00 appellate filing fee in one lump sum.

This is a dismissal as described by 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g).

A Judgment consistent with this Opinion will be entered.

Dated: 11/14 /2013

/s/ R. Allan Edgar
R. Allan Edgar
United States District Judge